Municipal Water Supply and Sewage Management in Cities

773. SHRI ANIL SHARMA: Will the Minister of URBAN AFFAIRS AND EMPLOYMENT be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the World Bank has suggested to Government to privatise the Municipal water supply and sewage management in major cities, as appeared in the Business Standard, dated the 15th December, 1998;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) the reaction of Government thereto;

(d) whether Government have consulted the State Government on the subject; and

(e) what is the opinion of the State Governments?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF URBAN AFFAIRS AND EMPLOYMENT (SHRI BANDARU DATTATRAYA): (a) to (c) No. Sir. The news item could not be located in the Delhi edition of Business Standard dated 15th December, 1998. However, it may be mentioned that the World Bank had carried out a study on Water Resources Management sector in India in collaboration with that Ministry of Water Resources. The study report indicates the need for State owned water utility and sanitation agencies to undertake reforms, which may vary from State to State and may lead in some cases to privatisation. The report also suggests that institutional reforms should be supported especially by enhancing private sector participation to enhance efficiency and improve service delivery. It is the policy of the Government to encourage private sector participation in infrastructure development.

(d) and (e) Some of the State Government and major urban water supply and sanitation agencies had been requested to furnish certain basic information/data and were consulted by the study team. The State Government and some of the major urban water supply and sanitation agencies were also invited to participate in a National Workshop organised by this Ministry in collaboration with the World Bank at New Delhi on 9-10 June, 1997 to discuss the strategies to be incorporated in the study report referred to above.

Simplification of Registration Formalities

774. SHRI C. RAMACHANDRAIAH: Will the Minister of URBAN AFFAIRS AND EMPLOYMENT be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have asked the State Governments to take measures for the simplification of registration and stamp duty;

(b) if so, the reaction of the State Governments thereto; and

(c) the steps taken/proposed to be taken to establish secondary mortgage market by simplifying unnecessary formalities?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF URBAN AFFAIRS AND EMPLOYMENT (SHRI BANDARU DATTATRAYA): (a) Yes, Sir. The State Governments have been asked to rationalize and simplify procedures for registration of documents and execution of mortgages. Ministry of Finance had convened a conference of State Finance Ministers, on Stamp Duty Reforms on 4.7,97. Consequent to the conference, a State Finance Ministers Committee recommended simplification of India Stamp Act 1899. A group of experts has already drafted model legislation simplifying the Act. This model legislation has been communicated to all the States for their comments.

(b) In response, some States like Tamil Nadu, Maharashtra and Karnataka have already reduced stamp duties.

(c) Ministry of Finance is taking steps to amend the National Housing Bank Act, 1987, to enable easy foreclosure.